

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING -- DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
FEBRUARY 1, 2006

ITEM 3

SUBJECT

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FINAL REPORT OF THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL FORUM TITLED "2005 REVIEW - WATER QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SALINITY - COLORADO RIVER SYSTEM" (2005 TRIENNIAL REVIEW), DATED OCTOBER 2005

DISCUSSION

Section 303 of the federal Clean Water Act requires that water quality standards be reviewed at least once every three years and revised as appropriate. Salinity standards (referred to as water quality objectives in California) for the Colorado River and a plan of implementation designed to achieve the objectives were recommended beginning in 1975 by the seven states in the Colorado River Basin (Basin) through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), established under the federal Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act (P.L. 93-320).

The objectives and plan of implementation were reviewed and updated, as necessary, in 1978 and every three years thereafter. No revisions to the salinity objectives have resulted from the past Triennial Reviews.

In 2005, the Forum again reviewed the State-adopted and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)-approved numeric salinity objectives and plan of implementation for salinity control for the Colorado River System. Changes in hydrologic conditions and water use within the Basin and salinity-flow relationships were evaluated, and the plan of implementation was updated. A salinity-flow model developed by the U.S. Geological Survey (Colorado River Simulation System model) was used in the preparation of the [2005 Triennial Review](#). The plan of implementation includes a number of federal and nonfederal measures to maintain the adopted salinity objectives while the Basin states continue to develop their compact-apportioned waters. The Forum recommended no changes in the existing numeric criteria for salinity at three locations in the Basin (below Hoover Dam [723 milligrams per liter (mg/l)], below Parker Dam [747 mg/l], and at Imperial Dam [879 mg/l]).

The plan of implementation includes:

- Completion of salinity control projects by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Bureau of Land Management.
- Implementation of five Forum recommended and adopted policies for effluent limitations, principally under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program.
- Implementation of nonpoint source management plans developed by the states and approved by USEPA.

The plan of implementation is designed to keep salinity concentrations at or below the established criteria. With implementation of the plan, modeling shows a low probability of exceedance of the criteria at any of the monitoring locations over a 20-year forecast period.

The Executive Summary of the 2005 Triennial Review is included as an attachment to this item. The full text of the 2005 Triennial Review (80 pages) is available on the Web site of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum at <http://www.coloradoriversalinity.org/>.

POLICY ISSUE

Should the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board):

1. Approve the 2005 Triennial Review of the Colorado River salinity objectives and plan of implementation?
2. Direct staff to submit the approved 2005 Triennial Review to USEPA pursuant to section 303 of the federal Clean Water Act?

FISCAL IMPACT

This activity is budgeted within the existing program, and no additional fiscal obligations will be incurred as a result of approving this item.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (REGIONAL WATER BOARD) IMPACT

Yes. Regional Water Boards 4, 7, 8, and 9.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the State Water Board:

1. Approves the 2005 Triennial Review of the Colorado River salinity objectives and plan of implementation.
2. Directs staff to submit the approved 2005 Triennial Review to USEPA pursuant to section 303 of the federal Clean Water Act.

DRAFT

December 1, 2005

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2006-

APPROVING THE FINAL REPORT OF THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL FORUM TITLED "2005 REVIEW - WATER QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SALINITY – COLORADO RIVER SYSTEM" (2005 TRIENNIAL REVIEW), DATED OCTOBER 2005

WHEREAS:

1. In 1975, the seven Colorado River Basin states, including California, established water quality standards (objectives) for salinity for the Colorado River.
2. Section 303 of the Federal Clean Water Act mandates that water quality standards be reviewed and revised, as necessary, at least once every three years.
3. The seven-state Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) reviewed the 1975 state-adopted and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)-approved standards in 1978 and every three years thereafter and concluded that the existing salinity standards were adequate.
4. The Forum conducted a review in 2005 and adopted a report which updated the plan of implementation and reaffirmed the adequacy of existing numeric standards. The report is titled "2005 Review—Water Quality Standards for Salinity—Colorado River System", dated October 2005.
5. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) held a Public Hearing on February 1, 2006 to consider the 2005 Triennial Review.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The State Water Board:

1. Approves the 2005 Triennial Review of the Colorado River salinity objectives and plan of implementation.
2. Directs staff to submit the approved 2005 Triennial Review to USEPA pursuant to section 303 of the federal Clean Water Act.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned, Acting Clerk to the Board, does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Resources Control Board held on February 1, 2006.

Selica Potter
Acting Clerk to the Board